

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By F. O. BELLEHR, Acting Director of Sunday School Course, The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

LESSON FOR AUGUST 15

JEROBOAM LEADS ISRAEL INTO SIN.

LESSON TEXT—1 Kings 12:28-33
GOLDEN TEXT—Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself down unto them, nor serve them. Ex. 20:4, 5.

Whether Jeroboam incited Israel's rebellion or was summoned home because of his being known as an opponent to Israel, we cannot say. He must have remembered Ahijah's prophecy (11:29-40) and he had another prophet on his side, Shemaiah (12:22-24), though Ahijah afterwards deserted him (14:1-18). In Egypt, Jeroboam had learned of the worship of the bull Apis and upon setting up his kingdom, saw at once the need of centering the religious life of the people elsewhere than in Jerusalem.

I. "Calves of Gold" vv. 25-30. Given these ten tribes by God (11:31) the people had chosen Jeroboam without seeming consultation with God, and the result was a tragic future for the Hebrews. David's monarchy lasted scarcely two generations. Rehoboam's second attempt at coercion (12:21-24) is rebuked and he settles down in Judea but fortifies many cities (11 Chron. 11:5-12; 1 Kings 12:34; 14:17). Jeroboam likewise built cities, Shechem and Penuel, but the result of the schism was a weakened people and Israel was the first to be carried into captivity and to extinction as a nation. Defensed cities are not adequate safety for a nation (11:38; 2 Chron. 20:29; Zech. 1:4, 5). Witness Liege and Antwerp. As a matter of political prudence Jeroboam's scheme of removing the center of worship from Jerusalem succeeded admirably. The center of gravity of a man and of a nation is that place where he centers his worship. The temple had no image, and his setting up of his images of bulls was a backward step, though doubtless it was regarded as best for the nation. Jeroboam's fatal error was in deflecting the people from the invisible Jehovah to the visible creations of their own hands. Mankind always prefers to trust to their own devices and to plan their own deliverance rather than to trust in God. The evidence of our trust in God is to obey him. Note Jeroboam took counsel, not as did Rehoboam, of the aged or the young, but "in his heart." We are not to lean to our own understanding but upon the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). Man is "slow of heart" and that one at all familiar with Hebrew history should repeat the mistake Aaron made is scarcely to be understood (Ex. 32:4-8). The errors and "isms" of today are but a repetition of the false teachings of former days dressed in a new garb, labeled with a new name; such is the deceitfulness of the human heart (Jer. 17:9). Jeroboam's excuse was plausible enough (v. 28) and appealed to the ever-present weakness of the human heart to seek some easier way of serving God. But man's way always becomes the hardest way. Jeroboam today would be classed as a "liberal" and held up as a "broad-minded man." Note his cunning appeal to sacred memories (v. 28).

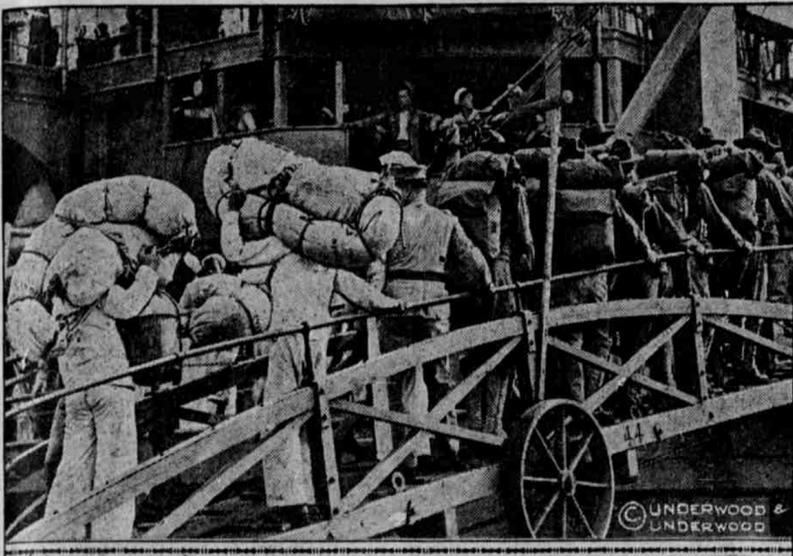
II. "Priests of the Lowest" vv. 31-33. Jeroboam's real concern was not that of the people but the permanency of his kingdom. Jeroboam was not introducing a new God but a new way of worship. One step always leads to another, and to fully establish this new way, and at the same time entirely to control the situation, he selected from among "all the people" priests who were to carry on Jehovah's worship. God had selected the sons of Levi and specially ordained them for this service (Num. 3:10). When the devil introduces a new religion, or any false idea of Christ, or the Bible, he always appeals to sacred memories, or else claims a "modern expression of the truth." Jeroboam not only chose those who would be beholden to himself, but he also selected positions in his kingdom, at either end, each of which was easily accessible. Thus to build and thus to select others than the sons of Aaron as priests was expressly forbidden. But such is the natural perversity and stubbornness of the human heart that it readily follows its leaders into all sorts of apostasy and error (Rom. 8:7). Jeroboam also changed (v. 32) the feast ordained of God on the 15th day of the seventh month (Lev. 23:33, 34) to one occurring in the eighth month. No possible appeal of local interests warranted any such substitution; to obey is better than to modify (Matt. 15:6; Mark 7:13). The last verse (v. 33) tells us whence all of these changes originated, "of his own heart"—hence it is not surprising that he finally assumed to himself the priest's office (1 Sam. 13:12, 13; 2 Chron. 2:16), a crowning act of apostasy and presumption.

III. The Main Teaching. Jeroboam's chief purpose was not the glory of God, but this new religion was for personal safety and glorification. His cunningly devised program became the agent of his own and the nation's destruction (13:34; 14:7-11; 2 Kings 10:29, 31), and his opprobrious title has become "Which made Israel to sin." Craft and trickery succeed for a time, but only those who obey God in all things build on a solid and lasting foundation. "Nothing in this world is worth doing wrong for." Boys do not succeed by breaking the rules of the game. Bad habits and vice are but a defiance of God's laws. There is no sadder sight than that of shipwrecked souls seeking their own gains at the cost of the ruined bodies and souls of their fellow men. To seek to clothe the calves of Egypt with modern religious inventions is the devil's most cunning device.

Pictures of World Events for News Readers

In This Department Our Readers In Fulton County and Elsewhere May Journey Around the World With the Camera on the Trail of History Making Happenings.

RE-ENFORCEMENTS FOR AMERICANS IN HAITI



Scene in the League Island navy yard, Philadelphia, as 500 bluejackets were being hurried aboard the battleship Connecticut to be taken to Haiti to re-enforce the command of Rear Admiral Caperton and help in restoring order on the island.

FAMOUS BRIDGE BLOWN UP BY THE BRITISH



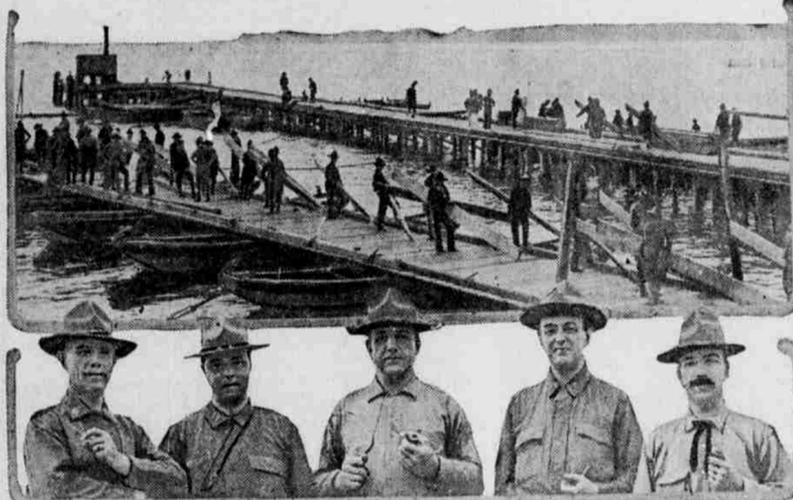
This is the famous Galata bridge at Constantinople, connecting European and Asiatic Turkey, which is said to have been blown up by a British submarine.

ONE OF WARSAW'S PRINCIPAL STREETS



Scene in the center of Warsaw, the capital of Russian Poland, which has been the object of the great Teuton fire in the eastern theater of the war and is now in the hands of the Germans.

TRAINING OUR NATIONAL GUARD ENGINEERS



Engineers of the national guard of various states are receiving valuable training from engineers of the regular army at the summer encampment at Belvoir, Va. Above, New York guardsmen are shown constructing a pontoon bridge across the Potomac. Below, left to right, are: Major Conrow, N. Y. N. G.; Capt. H. C. Woodward, Capt. J. C. Dieges, Chaplain Fell and Lieut. Frederick Wendel, all of the United States Army.

CASHIER AND GIRL MISSING



Abraham Cornelius, Jr., cashier of the Citizens National bank of Englewood, N. J., and Miss Loretta Adelgaia, formerly the bank's stenographer, both of whom are missing. The directors of the bank have reported a shortage of \$11,000 in the cashier's accounts.

NEW ARCHBISHOP IN WEST



Most Rev. Edward J. Hanna was confirmed as archbishop of San Francisco recently, succeeding the late Archbishop Riordan. The photograph shows him in his robes in St. Mary's cathedral.

WORTHY OF HIS FATHER



Several months ago, on the sands in the north of France, the eldest son and heir of Albert, king of the Belgians, was enrolled as a private in the Twelfth regiment of the Belgian infantry of the line, Prince Leopold, duke of Brabant, is a manly, good-looking lad of fourteen, and, as he takes both his profession and his position seriously, his father's words introducing his heir to the staff: "If I cannot finish my work in the course of this war, I rely on my son to do it," represented more than a mere formal phrase.

Had Remarkable View.

The Swiss astronomer, J. Pidox, reports in Astronomische Nachrichten that he was recently able from an elevated spot near Geneva where the air was particularly pure to distinguish plainly with the naked eye the lunar crater Copernicus when lying beyond the terminator, i. e., the summit of the crater was illuminated while the surrounding region was still in shadow.

FRANCE HONORS ROUGET DE L'ISLE



On July 14, the national festival day of France, the nation paid fitting tribute to the composer of the national anthem, "The Marseillaise." The body of Rouget de l'Isle, the composer, was exhumed from his grave at Cholesy le Roi and with pomp and ceremony was conveyed to the Palace of the Invalides. The photograph shows the procession passing through the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

"ANNIE" AT WORK IN GALLIPOLI



"Annie" is one of the powerful British guns with which the Turkish defenses on the Gallipoli peninsula are being battered by the allies.

ISONZO PEOPLE WELCOME ITALIANS



A scene in the Isonzo district when the long-prayed-for invasion took place. The Italian soldiers were hailed as the "redeemers" of the section which for as far back as the inhabitants could remember was under Austrian rule. Everywhere the inhabitants turned out to give them fitting greetings. The photograph shows women giving flowers to the Italian troops.